

*The*  
**Old North Church**  
& HISTORIC SITE

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## **Old North Church & Historic Site Restores Windows in its Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Chapel**

BOSTON – The Old North Church & Historic Site restored the windows of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century St. Francis Chapel, which houses the Old North Gift Shop, with funding from The George B. Henderson Foundation.

The St. Francis Chapel has an unexpected story to tell at the Old North Church & Historic Site about the immigrant community in the North End. The Reverend William H. Dewart, rector of Old North Church beginning in 1914, recognized the necessity of an Italian Mission, ministering to the needs of the thousands of Protestant Italian immigrants living in the neighborhood around the Old North Church. These immigrants were Waldensians, descended from a medieval Christian sect named for founder Peter Waldo (1140-1217). Waldo had called for a return to a stricter and simpler form of Christianity, which put him at odds with the established Catholic Church. As a result, Waldo and Waldensians faced persecution, and within centuries, the sect had almost disappeared. Remaining Waldensians found a new home as part of the Protestant community in Europe after the Reformation, and Waldensian Italians were among those who found a new home in the North End.

“Today, the St. Francis Chapel is home to the Old North Gift Shop, which brings in nearly \$500,000 in revenue that supports the preservation of the Old North Church & Historic Site and educational programs year-round,” said Executive Director Nikki Stewart. “The George B. Henderson Foundation’s grant allowed us to complete much-needed repairs that, in addition to preserving this significant building, improve air circulation, which is very important to our COVID-impacted operations.”

The [George B. Henderson Foundation](#) awards grants for projects focused on the enhancement of the appearance and preservation of outdoor elements in the city of Boston. Through past grants, the Foundation has supported capital projects such as the restoration of historic buildings, the creation of new public sculptures and gardens, restoration of historic monuments, and other projects that enhance the quality of life and sense of place while demonstrating design excellence. The preservation work was completed by Westmill Preservation of Halifax, MA.

This summer, visitors can explore Old North Church & Historic Site at a reduced admission price of \$5 per person. Patrons can walk through box pews, admire the 17th century angels flanking the church’s 1759 organ, and engage with the staff Educators. Visitors can also take a guided tour of the crypt for an additional \$5. For more information or to purchase tickets in advance, visit: [www.oldnorth.com](http://www.oldnorth.com).

### **About The Old North Foundation of Boston / Old North Church and Historic Site**

*Established in 1991, The Old North Foundation of Boston is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is responsible for historic site operations and interpretative, educational, and preservation programs at the iconic Old North Church and Historic Site. A secular organization that is independent of Christ Church in the City of Boston, Old North Church welcomes approximately 150,000 visitors annually while overseeing the use and preservation of an enduring symbol of American independence. The Foundation serves a wide audience by creating meaningful experiences through educational outreach, site-specific programming, and historical analysis. Old North Church works collaboratively with the City of Boston, the U.S National Park Service, the Freedom Trail Foundation, and other non-profits to foster educational and interpretive programs for students and visitors while engaging the public in Old North Church’s history and its role in inspiring liberty and freedom. For more information, visit: [www.oldnorth.com](http://www.oldnorth.com).*

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